

A. F. Tait

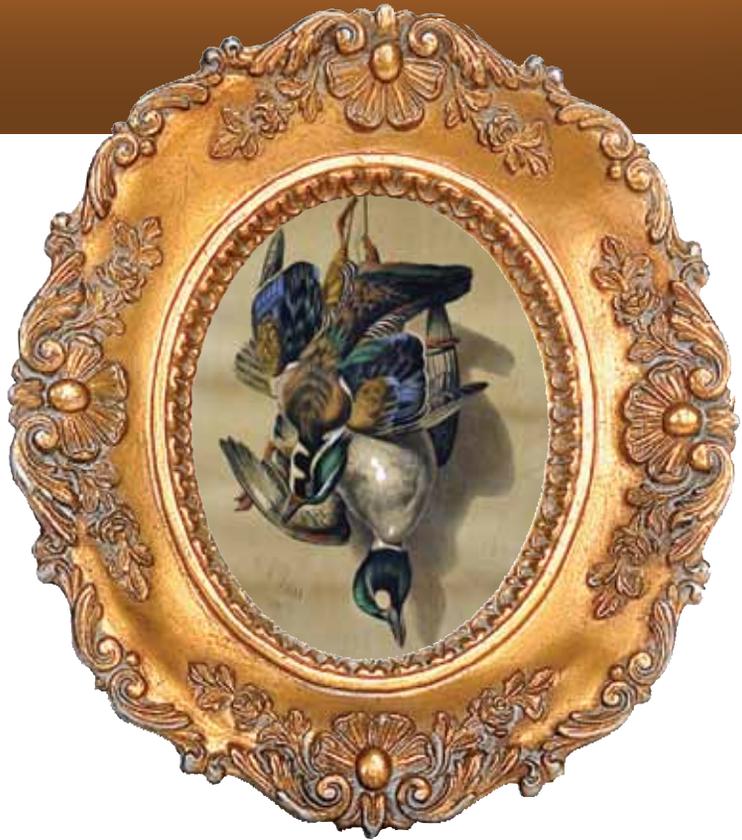
*Exhibit at Adirondack Museum
sheds light on iconic Adirondack artist.*



Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait (1819-1905) was the quintessential image-maker of Adirondack sport. An ardent sportsman and lover of the outdoors, Tait lived in the Adirondack region for extended periods of time near Chateaugay, Raquette and Long Lakes. Like many of his fellow artists in the 1850s and '60s, Tait came to the Adirondacks to hunt and fish, explore nature, and to hone his skills at transcribing and interpreting the wilderness around them. In most of these artists' works, people and their activities present in the scene are dwarfed by their natural surroundings. Tait is the exception; in his art, sportsmen share equal billing with



*"Autumn Morning, Racquette [sic] Lake," 1872
Oil on canvas*



*"American Feathered Game:
Wood Duck and Golden Eye," 1854
Hand-colored lithograph*



*"Fishing Through The Ice," 1854
Oil on canvas*



*"Still Hunting on the First Snow: A Second Shot," 1855
Oil on canvas*



"Quails," 1867
Lithograph



the flora and fauna in their sylvan settings. But nature is the underlying, if not primary, subject. The natural grandeur of the American land—particularly the Adirondacks—was taking center stage in American art, and Tait's Adirondack works define the region as a paradise for anglers and hunters.

Tait immigrated to America from England in 1850 and established himself as a painter. He discovered the Adirondacks in 1852, and spent the next thirty years painting the woods, waters, and people he found there. His images were among the best-known in nineteenth-century America thanks to Currier & Ives, whose lithographs of Tait's paintings helped popularize the Adirondacks as a sportsman's paradise.

"A Buck: Foggy Morning," 1879
Oil on canvas



*"American Hunting Scenes: A Good Chance," 1863
Lithograph*



*"American Speckled Brook Trout," 1864
Chromolithograph*

The images Tait created depict with great accuracy the details of life in the woods and on the waters of the Adirondacks. The clothing and equipment of Tait's hunters reveal much about mid-nineteenth-century technology and culture, and in that sense, his paintings also serve as historical documents.

The Adirondack Museum's exhibition, "The Adirondack World of A. F. Tait," consists of 38 works of art—prints and paintings—including a dozen loaned works. The exhibition assembles the best of Tait's Adirondack work on the artist's signature subject: hunting and fishing in the Adirondack wilderness.

—text and images courtesy of the Adirondack Museum



*"An Anxious Moment: A Three Pounder Sure," 1874
Lithograph*

Tom Dwyer



Visit the Adirondack Museum

Located on Route 28N/30 in the village of Blue Mountain Lake, the Adirondack Museum celebrates the art and history of the Adirondack region. The museum is set on 32 acres that house numerous exhibits depicting how people have lived, worked, traveled and played in the Adirondacks since the 1800s. Themes include: boats and boating, land transportation, outdoor recreation, the environment, logging, rustic traditions, fine arts and tourism. There are interactive discovery centers and hands-on activities.

The museum is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from May 27 through Oct. 17, 2011. For details on events, programs, and facilities, visit www.adirondackmuseum.org or call (518) 352-7311.

Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art



A photo of the artist A. F. Tait, taken in July 1893.